

Until the cause or causes
of SIDS are found,
research can only show us how to reduce the risks.

SIDS

reduce the risk



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada



Canadian Paediatric
Society



Canadian Institute of
Child Health



The Canadian Foundation for
the Study of Infant Deaths

For more information on
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
call 1-800-END-SIDS (363-7437) or visit
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/childhood-youth

Additional copies of the SIDS promotional material can be ordered from (613) 954-5995.

Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their health. *Health Canada*
© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Public Works
and Government Services Canada, 1999

Cat. H39-466/1-1999E

ISBN: 0-662-27611-6

Government
Publications



3 1761 11552266 6

CAI
HW
-Z385

Back to Sleep

Each week, 3 babies die of SIDS in Canada.

According to the latest research, there are
things you can do to reduce the risk of
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):
Call 1-800-END-SIDS (363-7437)



SIDS
Infant Risk

• **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**, also known as Crib Death, refers to the sudden and unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant under one year of age. Each week, 3 babies die of SIDS in Canada. Such deaths usually occur while the child is sleeping and remain unexplained even after a full investigation. Nobody knows how to prevent SIDS, but the latest research shows that there are things you can do to make your baby safer.

Sleeping Position

- **SIDS is less common in babies who sleep on their back.**

Put your baby to sleep on his or her back on a firm flat surface. You do not need anything special to do this. Babies who sleep on their back are not more likely to choke. Some babies have a medical problem that means they must sleep on their tummy. Ask your doctor which position is best for your child.

When the baby is awake and being watched, some "tummy time" is necessary for the baby's development. This will also avoid temporary flat spots which sometimes develop on the back of their head from lying on their back.

Older babies may be able to turn on their own from their back to their tummy. It is not necessary to force babies to sleep on their back when they are able to turn from their back to their tummy on their own.

Avoid soft mattresses, fluffy pillows, comforters, stuffed toys and bumper pads in the baby's crib as these could prevent proper air circulation around your baby's face. Plastics, such as the manufacturer's mattress wrapping, may also prevent air circulation, and should be removed to reduce the risk of SIDS and also suffocation.

Bedsharing is a common practice for many families. However, the risk of SIDS will not necessarily be reduced if your baby sleeps in the same bed as a parent, brother or sister. In fact, the risk of SIDS increases if the baby sleeps with a person who smokes. Your baby is also at risk if the person has been drinking alcohol or taking drugs that may make them less able to respond to the baby.

A Smoke- and Drug-Free Environment

- **Create a smoke- and drug-free environment for your baby before and after birth.**

Avoid using drugs such as alcohol, marijuana, crack, cocaine and heroin if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding. No one should smoke near your baby, not only for your baby's health, but also to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Dressing Baby For Sleep

- **Keep your baby warm — not hot.**

Babies need to be warm, but they should not become too hot. If the room temperature is right for you, it's right for the baby, too. To check if your baby is too hot, place your hand on the back of his or her neck. Your baby should not be sweating. Use lightweight blankets which you can add or take away according to the room temperature.



Breastfeeding

- **Breastfeeding is good for your baby.**

Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby. It has many benefits and may give some protection against SIDS.

It is really important that parents who have lost a child due to SIDS should not blame themselves. Until the cause or causes of SIDS are found, research can only show us how to reduce the risks.